

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 273705

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AORG, UNEP, UN

SUBJECT: UNEP INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

REF: STATE 258501

1. REQUEST EMBASSY TRANSMIT FOLLOWING LETTER TO UNEP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

2. DEAR SIR:

THIS LETTER CONTAINS UNITED STATES COMMENTS RESPONDING TO
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PAGE 02 STATE 273705

DECISION 22 (III) OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE GOVERNING

COUNCIL ON THE ITEM FOR THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FOURTH SESSION, ENTITLED "REVIEW OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION." THIS LETTER WILL ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE RELEVANCE TO THIS ITEM OF THE WORK OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SECTORS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM, ESTABLISHED BY RESOLUTION OF THE SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

THIS PERIOD OF TIME, IN THE VIEW OF THE UNITED STATES, HAS NOT REVEALED SERIOUS DEFECTS IN THE INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, NOR HAS IT PROVIDED THE NECESSARY OPERATING EXPERIENCE ON THE BASIS OF WHICH TO ASSESS WHETHER OR NOT

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MODIFICATIONS ARE DESIRABLE IN THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE UNEP AS ENVISAGED IN UNGA RESOLUTION 2997 (XXVII).

4. ALTHOUGH WE WOULD NOT, THEREFORE, MAKE ANY FINAL SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGES AT THIS TIME, WE DO BELIEVE THAT TWO AREAS MIGHT BE TAKEN UNDER STUDY WITH A VIEW TO MAKING POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS 32ND OR LATER SESSION.

5. THE FIRST CONCERNS THE POSSIBILITY OF HOLDING BIENNIAL RATHER THAN ANNUAL SESSIONS OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL. UNEP, IN CONSONANCE WITH THE UN ITSELF, HAS NOW ADOPTED A BIENNIAL SYSTEM OF BUDGETING. IN TIME, WE BELIEVE THAT CONSIDERABLE SAVINGS IN MONEY AND MANPOWER COULD BE REALIZED BY HOLDING SESSIONS OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL EVERY OTHER YEAR, SUCH SESSIONS TO COINCIDE WITH CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE BIENNIAL PROGRAM AND BUDGET. THIS SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL MIGHT REQUIRE CONSEQUENTIAL CHANGES IN OTHER OPERATING PROCEDURES OF THE UNEP AND THESE WOULD HAVE TO BE CAREFULLY STUDIED BEFORE SUCH A DECISION IS TAKEN.

6. WE BELIEVE THAT BIENNIAL MEETINGS OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL MIGHT BE AUGMENTED BY A MEETING OF COMMITTEE I, IN THE OFF YEAR, SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING THE

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PAGE 03 STATE 273705

OPPORTUNITY FOR GOVERNMENTS AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO CONSULT ON MATTERS OF PROGRAM EMPHASIS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF PROGRAM PRIORITIES AND FUND ALLOCATIONS DETERMINED BY THE REGULAR SESSIONS OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL.

7. A MEETING SCHEDULE ALONG THE ABOVE LINES COULD WELL REDUCE SIGNIFICANTLY THE AMOUNT OF TIME THE SECRETARIAT NOW SPENDS IN PREPARING FOR FORMAL MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL,

THUS FREEING THE SECRETARIAT TO DEVOTE ITS ENERGIES TO THE EXECUTION OF THE PROGRAM ITSELF. THE OFF-YEAR MEETINGS ON PROGRAM EMPHASIS WOULD STILL PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR CLOSE CONTACT BETWEEN MEMBER GOVERNMENTS AND THE SECRETARIAT.

8. THE UNITED STATES RECOMMENDS THAT THE GOVERNING COUNCIL REQUEST THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO STUDY THE FOREGOING SUGGESTION, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL, WITH A VIEW TO MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS THEREON TO THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL.

9. THE SECOND SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION WHICH THE UNITED STATES WOULD MAKE CONCERNS THE ENVIRONMENT COORDINATION BOARD (ECB). AT STOCKHOLM, THE UNITED STATES

ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE CREATION OF THE ECB, AS A PROMISING MECHANISM FOR INSURING A FULLY EFFECTIVE, GLOBAL, UN ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM, UTILIZING ALL OF THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE WITHIN THE UN SYSTEM. WE ARE NOT CERTAIN ON THE BASIS OF THE EXPERIENCE TO DATE THAT THE ECB IS REALIZING THIS GOAL. WE THINK, THEREFORE, THAT THE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE ECB, AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE ACC, MIGHT WELL BE SUBJECTED TO A FULL, FRANK, AND COMPREHENSIVE STUDY BY THE ECB ITSELF, WITH A VIEW TO RECOMMENDING TO THE GOVERNING COUNCIL HOW IMPROVEMENTS IN THE COORDINATING MACHINERY FOR ENVIRONMENT COOPERATION CAN BE REALIZED.

10. ACCORDINGLY, THE UNITED STATES RECOMMENDS THAT THE GOVERNING COUNCIL REMAND THIS SUGGESTION ALSO TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND REQUEST THAT HE UNDERTAKE AN APPROPRIATE STUDY, UTILIZING THE FULL RESOURCES OF THE ECB.
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PAGE 04 STATE 273705

11. WITH REGARD TO THE INPUT OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL TO THE AFOREMENTIONED AD HOC COMMITTEE ON RESTRUCTURING OF THE UN SYSTEM, AT THIS STAGE WE LIMIT OURSELVES TO RE-EMPHASIZING THAT UNEP WAS CREATED IN RESPONSE TO THE EXPRESSED BELIEF OF GOVERNMENTS AT THE STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE THAT GLOBAL CONCERNS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT SHOULD BE GIVEN A HIGHLY PROMINENT FOCUS IN THE UN SYSTEM. THESE CONCERNS LED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNEP, AS A SEPARATE PROGRAM WITHIN THE UN, WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO PREVENT THE FURTHER DETERIORATION OF THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF GENERAL POLICY GUIDANCE FOR THE DIRECTION AND COORDINATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS WITHIN THE UN SYSTEM. WE BELIEVE THAT THE NEED

FELT AT STOCKHOLM AND GIVEN FORM AND SUBSTANCE BY UNGA RESOLUTION 2997 (XXVII) STILL EXISTS AND THAT THE INTEGRITY OF UNEP PROGRAMS MUST BE PRESERVED. IT IS, THEREFORE, OUR STRONG VIEW THAT THE WORK OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE SHOULD TAKE THIS OVER-RIDING CONSIDERATION INTO FULL ACCOUNT.

12. BEYOND THE FOREGOING GENERAL OBSERVATION, MY GOVERNMENT AT THIS STAGE MUST RESERVE ITS POSITION WITH REGARD TO FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE STRUCTURE OF UNEP. WE BELIEVE THAT OTHER GOVERNMENTS WILL BE EQUALLY HESITANT TO REACH DETAILED CONCLUSIONS IN THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL WITH REGARD TO THE WORK OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE.

FOR THIS REASON, THE UNITED STATES SUGGESTS THAT THE REPORT OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL ON THIS POINT BE CONFINED TO GENERAL OBSERVATIONS, OF WHICH THE FOREGOING SEEMS TO US TO BE THE MOST IMPORTANT.

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